

Virginia Department of Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services

State Strategic and Operational Plan 2010-2013

Executive Summary

§32.1-111.3 of the Code of Virginia requires the development of a comprehensive, coordinated, statewide emergency medical services plan by the Virginia Department of Health's Office of EMS (OEMS). The Board of Health must review, update, and publish the plan triennially, making such revisions as may be necessary to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Commonwealth's emergency care system. The objectives of the plan shall include, but not be limited to the seventeen objectives outlined in §32.1-111.3. For this reason, OEMS endeavored to review the existing State Emergency Medical Services Plan and incorporate information vital to the future of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) System in Virginia.

In Virginia, EMS is the umbrella term for a continuum of health services including pre-hospital medical services and the trauma system. The EMS system in Virginia is a coordinated system of over 35,000 trained and certified providers, more than 4200 permitted EMS vehicles and greater than 650 licensed EMS agencies. This system provides ground and air emergency medical care to all citizens of the Commonwealth.

It is the mission of OEMS to reduce death and disability resulting from sudden or serious injury and illness in the Commonwealth through planning and development of a comprehensive, coordinated statewide EMS system; and provision of other technical assistance and support to enable the EMS community to provide the highest quality emergency medical care possible to those in need. Additionally, the vision of OEMS is to establish a unified, comprehensive and effective EMS system for the Commonwealth of Virginia that provides for the health and safety of its citizens and visitors.

The process utilized to revise and update the State EMS Plan (heretofore referred to as "The Plan") incorporated some new methods of gathering information. Each of the thirteen subcommittees of the EMS Advisory Board (Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), Communications, Emergency Management, EMS for Children (EMSC), Financial Assistance and Review (FARC), Finance, Legislative and Planning, Medical Direction, Medevac, Professional Development, Regulation and Policy, Transportation, Trauma System Oversight and Management, and Workforce Development) were provided a standard planning template, identifying the: critical mission, commitment and values, vision for the future, existing strengths and weaknesses, and action strategies, and implementation steps and involved parties for their particular committee and/or discipline.

Using the information gathered from the committee planning templates, as well as current reference documents, including the EMS Agenda for the Future, and the EMS Education Agenda for the Future, among others, OEMS staff made revisions and updates to the State EMS Plan. ***The plan outlines the direction and defines the agenda of the EMS system for the future, incorporating Developing Partnerships, Creation of Tools and Resources, Developing Infrastructure, and Assuring Quality and Education as its core strategies.*** The specific changes/updates to the strategic initiatives within those core strategies are identified in a subsequent section of this document.

A draft of the Plan was approved by the Finance, Legislation and Planning Committee, presented to the EMS Advisory Board at their May 2010 meeting for approval in August 2010, and posted to the OEMS Website for public comment from June 1 to July 16, 2010. Forty seven comments were received, most of which were general comments on the EMS System as a whole, rather than specifically on the draft of the Plan. The plan was then unanimously approved by the EMS Advisory Board at their August 2010 meeting.

As mandated by the Code of Virginia, OEMS has presented the Plan to the Board of Health for approval.

Summary of changes/updates to State EMS Plan:

Core Strategy

Page in Plan

Core Strategy 1: Develop Partnerships

Collaboration and incorporation among all components and stakeholders are essential elements of a unified and comprehensive EMS system.

Strategic Initiative 1.1 – Promote Collaborative Approaches

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Changes include: Focus on tracking traffic on websites and social media. Educating local government officials on EMS planning, coordination, benefits, and incentives for EMS personnel.

Strategic Initiative 1.2 – Coordinate responses to emergencies both natural and man-made

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Changes include: Development/revision of guidance documents and planning templates for Emergency Response Teams and emergency planning. Focus recruitment of medical response resources in areas of the state lacking those services.

Core Strategy 2: Create Tools and Resources

The creation of tools and resources essential to ensure an up to date, progressive, and effective EMS System.

Strategic Initiative 2.1 – Sponsor EMS related research and education

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Changes include: Creation of reporting tools within the Virginia Pre-hospital Information Bridge (VPHIB) designed to provide statistics on the EMS system. Evaluate reports from trauma centers related to over/under triage of trauma patients by EMS providers/agencies. Collection and assessment of EMS provider demographic information, specifically related to recruitment, retention, and the impact of an aging workforce on the provision of EMS.

Strategic Initiative 2.2 – Supply quality education and certification to EMS personnel.

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Changes include: Incorporation of competency based standards for EMS training programs based on new EMS Regulations. Development of voluntary EMS Officer Standards. Implementation of new EMS education standards, based on national education standard documents.

Core Strategy 3: Develop Infrastructure

Continued efforts to develop and maintain the infrastructure of the EMS system ensures OEMS's ability to provide structure to the system in terms of training, regulation, emergency operations, trauma, and critical care. This will allow EMS providers and agencies to continue to be able to provide high quality services to the citizens of the Commonwealth.

Strategic Initiative 3.1 – EMS Regulations, Protocols, Policies, and Standards

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Changes include: Development of guidelines for Air Medical Services (AMS) resource utilization, triage, and safety. Implementation of voluntary standards of excellence for EMS agencies. Revision of trauma center and regional EMS council designation criteria. Development of standard EMS agency and vehicle inspection checklist, and standard patient care guidelines and formulary.

Strategic Initiative 3.2 – Focus recruitment and retention efforts

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Changes include: Implementation of voluntary standards of excellence for EMS agencies. Expand existing recruitment and retention programs.

Strategic Initiative 3.3 – Upgrade technology and communication systems

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Changes include: Ensuring emergency radio systems comply with related new state and federal regulations. Adoption of Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) as statewide standard for emergency medical radio systems. Establish statewide centralized AMS dispatch system.

Summary of changes/updates to State EMS Plan (Continued):

Strategic Initiative 3.4 – Stable support for EMS funding

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Changes include: Development of standard procurement and pricing standards for state grant funded EMS vehicles and equipment. Develop guidance documents to assist EMS agencies to account for use of state and other grant funds and donations.

Strategic Initiative 3.5 – Enhance regional and local EMS efficiencies

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Changes include: Increase regulation and oversight of AMS statewide. Education of local government officials regarding the value of a high quality EMS system, especially in economically depressed areas as well as assuming a greater responsibility in their local EMS system.

Core Strategy 4: Assure Quality and Evaluation

Evaluation of every aspect of the EMS system ensures maintaining a high quality system, as well as identification of best practices, and/or areas of improvement to the system.

Strategic Initiative 4.1 – Assess compliance with EMS performance driven standards.

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Changes include: Maintaining performance improvement, trauma triage, and pre-hospital stroke standards. Develop and maintain statewide pre-hospital and inter-hospital ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI) triage plan. Review and evaluate data collection and submission efforts through the VPHIB program. Review functional adequacy of EMS vehicles based on national/international standards.

Strategic Initiative 4.2 – Assess and enhance quality of education for EMS providers.

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Changes include: Updating certification and quality improvement processes. Substitute practical examination with competency based training.

Strategic Initiative 4.3 – Pursue new initiatives that support EMS

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Changes include: Engage EMS system in injury, illness and violence prevention efforts. Promotion of safety, wellness and physical health initiatives for Fire and EMS personnel.